



NEWS

from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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**SERVICE APPROVES BISMUTH SHOT FOR '96-'97 WATERFOWL
HUNTING SEASON, PROPOSES PERMANENT APPROVAL**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today granted temporary approval of bismuth-tin shot for the 1996-97 waterfowl hunting season and issued a formal proposal to permanently approve it as an alternative to steel shot. The announcement means that hunters can use bismuth-tin for the upcoming waterfowl seasons.

Bismuth-tin and steel are the only types of shot currently approved for waterfowl hunting. Lead shot was phased out for waterfowl hunting in 1991 because it is toxic to birds that ingest it while feeding.

The Bismuth Cartridge Company petitioned the Service to legalize the use of bismuth-tin shot. The petition acknowledged the company's responsibility to complete three studies to determine the effects of ingested bismuth-tin shot on waterfowl.

The Service gave temporary approval for the use of bismuth-tin shot for the latter part of the 1994-95 season and for the 1995-96 season after the company submitted data for an initial, short-term test which showed no toxicity. Since then, the company has completed all required toxicity studies. None has shown any evidence of a toxicity problem.

The proposal to permanently approve bismuth-shot is open for public comment until October 15, 1996. Comments may be sent to Chief, Office of Migratory Bird Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1849 C Street, NW., Mail Stop 634 ARLSQ, Washington, DC 20240.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages 508 national wildlife refuges encompassing 92 million acres, as well as 72 national fish hatcheries.

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The agency also enforces Federal wildlife laws, manages migratory bird populations, stocks recreational fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, administers the Endangered Species Act, and assists foreign governments in their conservation efforts. It oversees the Federal Aid program that funnels Federal excise taxes on angling and hunting equipment to state wildlife agencies. This program is a cornerstone of the Nation's wildlife management efforts, funding fish and wildlife restoration, boating access, hunter education, shooting ranges, and related projects across America.